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NOTES
on the two
JESUIT MANUSCRIPTS

*Belonging to the estate of the late Hon. John Neilson, of
Quebec, Canada,*

by

L'ABBE SASSEVILLE, F. R. S. C.,

and

DR. JOHN GILMARY SHEA.

Edited by

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of Montreal.*

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INTRODUCTION.

Some two or three years ago, in looking through the library of the late Hon. JOHN NEILSON, of Quebec, my attention was called to two original Jesuit manuscripts. I at once saw their great value, and in subsequent communications with my cousin, Surgeon Major NEILSON, I begged further particulars of them. In the meantime, I had mentioned my discovery to Mr. WOODWARD, the American bibliophile. He, in turn, mentioned the matter to Prof. PILLING, of Washington, who was at that time engaged upon a work on *The Languages of the North American Indians*. Their value to him was of considerable importance, and he at once wrote to Surgeon NEILSON for fuller particulars. The learned Abbé SASSEVILLE's good services were called into requisition, and, with the devotion of a savant, he compiled an abstract of the contents of the two manuscripts, page for page, a work involving much labor and learning. It is hoped that arrangements may be made for the publication in full of the two precious manuscripts. Dr. JOHN GILMARY SHEA, the learned scholar on all that pertains to early Jesuit Relations on this continent, also contributes to Abbé SASSEVILLE's notes, a review of the same with comments, which will be found valuable and interesting.

My object in publishing this pamphlet is simply to put upon record the existence of these valuable manuscripts, as they have been supposed lost or destroyed. Their value for a complete study of the Illinois and Montagnais dialect cannot be questioned.

G. M. FAIRCHILD, JR.

LETTER TO DR. NEILSON.

Ste. Foye, December 15, 1885.

HUBERT NEILSON, ESQ., M. D.,
Surgeon-Major at the Citadel of Kingston,
Etc., etc., etc.

MY DEAR DOCTOR:

I herewith transmit you my study of the two manuscripts which you have given me to analyze.

I can vouch for the exactitude of the analysis; as to the rest, you will very likely find many faults both of form and style, which I have no time to redress, and for which I beg your indulgence. I sincerely regret not having had time to do more, as a very interesting book could be written on these two valuable manuscripts and their authors.

You are deserving of great praise for your serious studies, and the invaluable services you are rendering the cause of history.

Please receive my most sincere good wishes for the end of this year and the beginning of the next.

Your most devoted,

J. SASSEVILLE, *Prêtre.*

P. S.—How came these *savants* of the United States to know you were in possession of these precious manuscripts?

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Of a very old manuscript, containing Prayers, Instructions, and a Catechism in the Illinois language, written by Père Alloüez, for the use of Père Marquette, both Jesuit Missionaries of the Seventeenth Century, in the countries of the West.

This precious manuscript measures four inches and two lines in length, by three inches and one line in width (English measure.)

The paper is yet strong, although much faded by years, which gives it the appearance of parchment. The writing is that of the seventeenth century. The ink has preserved its natural black color, and the whole is perfectly readable, notwithstanding it is very finely written.

The volume has once been bound, but the cover has been torn off since. Every leaf, though, has been preserved intact.

This material description of the book given, I shall proceed to the analysis of the matter it contains, following it exactly, page by page.

The first sheet is not numbered, and contains no writing on the *dextro* side of it. Turning the leaf, we find written on the *verso*, in Latin, the following note :

“ *Notandum* ”

“ *quod ubicumque reperitur* ”

“ *tchi, debet scribi & pronun-* ”

“ *ciari si. Chi vero, ut* ”

“ *apud gallos.* ”

The regular paging of the book commences on the *dextro* side of the second sheet, which bears the following title :

P. 1. “ *Preces Illicæ.* ” (Illinois) Illinois Prayers.

“ *pro signo crucis.* ”

The formula of the sign of the cross is in Illinois.

The title: "Act of Faith in the Presence of God," is in French, and the prayer under it, covering all of that page and part of the second, is in Illinois.

P. 2. "Act of Adoration," in French. The prayer under this title, running four lines on page 3, is in Illinois.

P. 3. "Act of Faith," in French." The balance of the third is taken up by the prayer, in Illinois, under this title.

Up to page 19, the titles are all in French and the text in Illinois.

P. 4. "Act of Hope." All of the fourth page, which contains sixteen lines, is taken up for the reproduction of this prayer.

P. 5. "Act of Love." The text under this caption occupies the fifth page and four lines of the sixth.

PP. 6 and 7. "Act of Thanks." Part of the sixth and the seventh page, at the bottom of which there is a blank of about an inch.

P. 8. "Demand." All of that page. To be understood that "Act of" should go before the word "Demand."

P. 9. "Offering" (Act of). All the page except a blank of about an inch.

P. 10. "Act of Contrition." All of page 10, less a blank of an inch.

PP. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. Under the various titles—"At the Commencement of the Mass," "At the Elevation of the Host," "At the Elevation of the Chalice," "Offerings of the Merits of Jesus Christ," "Act of Grace towards Faith"—these pages contain the prayers which the Indians use to recite during Mass. Page 18 is blank.

P.P. 19, 20, 21 and 22. These pages contain the *Pater*, the *Ave Maria*, and the *Credo*, Latin caption. The text is in Illinois.

PP. 22 and 23. Commencing about one third of page 22, we read the following title in French: *À N. Dame Im. (Immaculée) Patronne de la Mission des Illinois.* (To Our Lady Immaculate Patroness of the Illinois Mission.) Follows a prayer, in Illinois, which covers up to about one third of page 23. The rest is occupied by a prayer, in Illinois, under the French title: "To the Guardian Angel."

PP. 24, 25 and 26 contain three prayers in Illinois, en-

titled: "For the Parents," "For the Defuncts," "For the Missionary" (French), and another for the end of the Mass.

PP. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32. These pages contain the Litanies, in Illinois, of the Sacred Name of Jesus, with two other prayers which close the morning exercises. Then follow the evening prayers, many of which are repeated from those of the morning.

PP. 33, 34, 35 and 36 contain the evening prayers as above related.

PP. 37 and 38. "For the Little Crown," in French. (This is an abbreviation of the Rosary, in honor of the Blessed Virgin.) This prayer, in Illinois, takes up page 37. Page 38 is blank.

PP. 39 and 40. Page 39 contains, in Illinois, the Ten Commandments of God, and page 40, some text, without caption, which may be taken as an explanation of the Commandments of the Church. The only title in these two pages heads page 39, and is in Latin: *Dei Mandata*.

PP. 41, 42, 43 and 44. In French, "Litanies" (of the Sacred Name of Jesus). They occupy, in Illinois text, all of the above pages.

PP. 45, 46 and 47. The title in Latin: *Asperges me, &c.* This Anthem, which is generally sung before Mass, is in Illinois, and occupies these three pages, together with a long prayer. The bottom of page 47 bears the title, in Latin: *Per Stám. (sanctam) Virg. (virginem)*. It heads a short prayer of four lines, in Illinois, in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

P. 48. We read the following title in French: "In the tone of *Dne. (Domine) Saluum, &c.*" It is an hymn with three strophes of three lines each. Half the page is blank.

PP. 49 and 50. The title, in Latin, of the hymn: *Veni Creator! &c.* This hymn is composed of six strophes, of four lines each, in Illinois, and covers about one third of page 50.

P. 50. The title, in Latin, of the hymn: *Panis Angelicus, &c.* This chant, composed of two strophes of four lines each, occupies the rest of page 50.

P. 51. A canticle, in Illinois, bearing no title, composed of two strophes of six lines each, occupies about two-thirds of page 51. The rest of the page is blank.

PP. 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 and 66.

These fifteen pages contain a canticle with forty-five strophes or verses. Each page contains three verses of six lines each. This canticle has no other title but these three words, in French: "On Unfortunate Creature, &c." It is made up in dialogue form and is supposed to be a conversation between God and a reprobate soul. This chant, in the French language, is well known and much in use in Canada. It is a translation, or rather an imitation of the French version. The two interlocutors are designated by the letters J. and R. J. probably stands for Jesus, and R. for the reprobate soul.

PP. 67, 68, 69, 70 and 71. Under the title, in French: "For the Holy," that is to say, "In honor of the Saints," follows a canticle, in Illinois, which covers these five pages. It is also written in the form of a dialogue; J. and R. are the two interlocutors.

Pages 72 to 93, inclusively, are blank pages, with no other marks on them but the written number of each page. In the numbering of these pages we find an omission; 87 follows 85, 86 having been inadvertently omitted.

PP. 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102 and 103. Under the Latin title, *Instructio pro Moribundis non Baptizatis*, is to be found an instruction in Illinois, covering ten pages (each page containing, on an average, nineteen lines), to prepare the dying for the reception of Baptism. Part of it is composed of an exhortation, and the other part is made up of questions and answers, as in a catechism. The instruction terminates with the Latin phrase: *Tunc est Baptizandus. (i. e. Moribundus.)*

From page 104 to 137, inclusively, there are thirty-four blank pages, with no writing other than the number on each page, which is put regularly, without omission or transposition.

From 138 to 176 inclusively, there are thirty-eight pages, of fifteen lines each, on an average, containing a catechism or familiar explanation of the Catholic doctrine, in Illinois, for the instruction of the Indians preparatory to their admission to baptism. The matter is arranged as in an ordinary catechism, by questions and answers. This sort of catechism is preceded by a prayer under the French titles: "Catechism," "Invocation," and ends by another prayer under the French title: "Prayer to recite at the end of the Catechism."

PP. 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184 and 185. These nine pages are in blank, with the exception of the numbers on each, and a short inscription on the *verso* of the last page. It is the only indication which makes known the origin of the manuscript, and which permits us to assign the date with a certain amount of probability. This inscription, in French, reads: "Made by the P. Cl. Alloïez, for Père Marquette."

The document contains neither date nor explicit information.

To guide us, we have only the proofs of induction, which sometimes have great force.

This manuscript was certainly written for the Illinois Missions, for it contains the prayers and the religious instructions in the native tongue of that tribe.

Those who are familiar with the study of manuscripts will find the writing to be unmistakably that of the seventeenth century.

Then, the final note, although written by a strange hand, bears the same character of age and authenticity. We may safely infer that this document was written by the Père Cl. Alloïez, and that it was used by Père Jacques Marquette, who took part in the discovery of the Mississippi.

Why did Père Alloïez write this book for the use of his colleague?

It suffices to know the principal circumstances of the lives of these two men to see that they had intimate relations, and that the one was, so to speak, the preceptor of the other.

Père Alloïez was a missionary in the regions of Lakes Superior and Michigan, from 1665. (See *Le Répertoire du Clergé Canadien*, p. 43.)

Père Marquette was sent there about 1668 (or 1670?). Père Alloïez had among his neophytes a group of Illinois Indians which he had converted to Christianity. To instruct and evangelize these Indians, he must have learned the Illinois language. A question of fact can naturally be made: At what date was this manuscript, which we are studying, written, or at least, remitted to Père Marquette?

Marquette sailed with Joliet to the discovery of the Mississippi on the 17th of May, 1673. He went back again in November, 1674, to convert the Illinois. It was then he founded

the Kaskaskias Mission. On his return from this last mission, he died on the shores of Lake Michigan, on the 19th of May, 1675, two years after his departure with Joliet, to the discovery of the great river.

We can reasonably infer that this manuscript has been remitted to Père Jacques Marquette by Père Cl. Alloilez, either in the month of May, 1673, or in November, 1674.

(*Répertoire du Clergé Canadien. Relations inédites de la Nouvelle France, pour faire suite aux Anciennes Relations.*—2 vol., in-12°—Paris—Charles Douliol—1861.)

Ste. Foye, near Quebec, December 12, 1885.

J. SASSEVILLE, *Prêtre.*

This interesting manuscript is to-day the property of Surgeon-Major Hubert Neilson, attached to Battery B, at present in garrison at Kingston, Ontario. It could not have fallen into better hands. This gentleman, well versed in the knowledge of the sources of Canadian history, is also an enthusiastic appreciator. The proprietor has deposited his valuable manuscript with John Neilson, Esq., of Ste. Foye, near Quebec. To the kindness of this gentleman, we are indebted for having been able to give this brief and somewhat imperfect study.

J. S., *Ptre.*

We may add that this precious manuscript, which we have just described, formed part of the Library of the Jesuits, in their College, at Quebec. This collection of the Jesuit Fathers was sold at auction, and its contents were dispersed, and some even lost forever. Hon. John Neilson became the possessor of this manuscript (as well as of the following one), and we are indebted for their preservation to the enlightened zeal of his descendants.

J. S., *Ptre.*

MONTAGNAIS DICTIONARY.

Here is another manuscript, whose description commences on the next page.

This manuscript is of particular interest to philologists, who are given to the study of the primitive languages spoken by the Indians of North America.

This volume formed part of the Jesuits' Library, in their ancient College, at Quebec.

In 1800, after the death of Père Cazot, the last surviving member of the Order of the Jesuits in Canada, the British Government seized their property, and their library was sold at auction. Hon. John Neilson bought a certain number of volumes, among which were, singularly enough, the precious manuscript, whose analysis is given in the preceding pages, and the Montagnais Dictionary (no less precious), whose description follows.

These two documents are in the hands of John Neilson, Esq., a son of the honorable purchaser, who knows the full value of them.

Surgeon-Major Neilson, residing at Kingston, seems to be more especially the owner of the preceding manuscript.

J. S., *Ptre.*

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Of a Manuscript containing a Dictionary of the Montagnais Language (in French), composed by Père Antoine Silvy, Jesuit Missionary in Canada, in the Seventeenth Century.

He arrived at Quebec, on the 7th of June, 1671, and returned to France, in 1707. He evangelized the Indians of the West during seven or eight years. From thence to Tadousac and the Hudson Bay, for a period of ten years. Returning from these last Missions, he sojourned in Montreal and in Quebec, until his departure for France. (*Relations inédites des Jésuites. Répertoire du Clergé Canadien*, pp. 52 and 53.)

The manuscript, whose description we are undertaking, is composed of 104 sheets, or 208 pages, of strong paper, somewhat faded by Time and much more so by usage. Many sheets bear the imprint of the fingers. It seems as though some drops of water had also fallen on them.

The cover is in moose skin and larger than the book, so as to protect the leaves. The leather, although much worn and a little cracked on the back of the book, seems to have been impermeable.

The volume is four and a half inches long by three and a half inches wide, English measure, inside the cover, which is, as already stated, larger.

The paging is irregular and very often omitted. It seems as though the desire had been to number the pages 1, 2, 3, &c., commencing at each initial letter only. But this system has not been followed, and most of the pages have no number on them.

The writing appears to be that of the seventeenth century, very open and fine, but easily read.

The margin of the pages are covered with signs and points; there are crosses, bars, angles, &c. Unfortunately there is no key by which their signification could be determined.

Occasionally, at the top of a page, or towards the centre, is to be found the principal or initial letter, of the words we wish to consult.

Now and then, one half or a whole blank page. It is much to be regretted they have not been utilized to give the reader explanations which would now be thankfully received.

Neither date nor information of any kind is given about the time this manuscript was composed. But in following up closely the career of Père Silvy, we may pretty correctly say, that the book was written while he was in the Montagnais Missions of Tadousac and the Hudson Bay, since this Dictionary reproduces the language of his neophytes.

In view of these circumstances, we can reasonably state that this manuscript was written between the years 1678 and 1685.

STUDYING THE MANUSCRIPT BY SEPARATE PARTS.

First page, *recto* :

"*P. Antonius Silvy, è Societate Jesu, hoc Dictionarum conscripsit.*"

"*DICTIONAIRE MONTAGNAIS.*"

"*Utinam caracteribus majoribus exarasset,*"

"*Alphabeticum ordinem Servasset,*"

"*Notas suas & puncta explanasset.*"

"*Requiescat in pace! de Missione bene meritus.*"

The title, in French, is probably in the handwriting of Père Silvy. The Latin sentences which follow, are in a different handwriting.

A

Fourteen sheets, or twenty-eight pages, are devoted to the letter A. The twenty-eighth page is almost blank.

B

At the bottom of page 28, we find the following note :

"*B. idem est ac P.*"

C

This letter occupies eight and a half pages, with one half page in blank.

E

Two and a third pages are taken up by the letter E. The rest of the third page is in blank.

C

This letter occupies two and a half pages. The other half of the third page is in blank.

H

Under the letter H, we find but eight words. The rest of the page is blank.

J

Nine pages of text follow under this letter, which is also employed for the letter I. On the tenth page, we find an Indian word, and opposite, the English translation:

Katchiougou { Smoked flesh meat,
or dried flesh.

K

Letter K occupies twenty-five and one half pages; the other half page is in blank.

M

Twenty-two and two-thirds pages are given up to letter M. One and one-third page is blank.

N

Letter N, occupies for its share, seventeen and two-thirds pages; two and one-third pages are blank.

8

8 is a double letter, composed of *o* and *u*, and is naturally pronounced as *ou*, in French. This letter plays an important function in the Montagnais language. It occupies twenty-five and one-half pages of the Dictionary. This letter is generally placed at the beginning of the words in which it is used, and rarely seen in the body of a word, some of which are of a discouraging length. The twenty-sixth page is one-half blank.

P

Letter P seems the most abundant of the Montagnais alphabet, covering twenty-seven and a quarter pages of the Dictionary. The three-fourths of the last page under this letter is blank.

R

Letter R occupies but two and three quarters pages, leaving one-fourth of the third page in blank.

S

Six and one half pages are covered by the words of which the letter S is the initial. It terminates by a half page in blank.

T

Letter T occupies thirteen and one half pages. The remaining half page, with another page, are in blank.

We have now come to the end of the book, which we cannot close without making a few appropriate remarks. Philologists have often observed how poor of expression were the Indian languages compared to those of the civilized nations, particularly so with the Greek and Latin languages.

The analysis of the present Montagnais Dictionary adds a new proof of the truthfulness of these observations.

There are really but fourteen letters in the alphabet of this language: A—C—E—G—H—J—K—M—N—P—R—S—T, and the double letter S, *ou* = 14. B is replaced by P. D, F, I, L, O, Q, U, V, X, Y, Z, are out altogether. To supply their wants we must have recourse to other letters rendering approximative sounds. Example:

D	can be replaced by	I
F	“ “ “	H
I	“ “ “	J
O	is expressed by	S
U	“ “ “	S
Q	can be replaced by	K
X	“ “ “	CH
V	“ “ “	B

The Spanish language offers frequent examples of the substitution of certain letters for others, which are not much used.

If we now examine the number of words composing their language, we are equally surprised at their sterility, when compared to modern languages, so rich and so varied.

The circle of ideas of the Indian nations, are necessarily limited; and the words expressing them, are equally unnumerous. To these causes can be attributed the *poverty of expression* so much observed in the Indian languages.

All of the above observations could yet be developed; but I must conclude.

Ste. Foye, near Quebec, December 14, 1885.

J. SASSEVILLE, *Prêtre*.

LETTER OF DR. JOHN GILMARY SHEA.

G. M. FAIRCHILD, JR., ESQ.,
New York City.

DEAR SIR :

Of the two manuscripts described by the Abbé Sasseville, there can be no question as to their importance. They represent the extreme Eastern and Western Algonquin tribes known to the French, and whose dialects were studied and reduced to writing by the early missionaries. Of the Montagnais nothing has been printed by Ethnological Societies here or in England, and the tribe is known generally by a barbarous misnomer derived from a bay of another tribe. Father Silvy's Dictionary has therefore great linguistic value, the long period of his stay among the Montagnais enabling him to master their language thoroughly. The Illinois Prayer Book and Catechism ascribed to Father Alloïez seems to me to belong to a later period. That missionary had many tribes under his care, Ottawas, Chippewas, Menomonees, Pottawatomies, Sacs, Foxes, Kickapoos, as well as stray Illinois and Miamis. Nothing that I read in the early Relations indicates that he acquired such a knowledge of each language as would be required to write a book like this, which seems to show a long and extensive study of a single dialect.

F. Alloïez though he preceded Marquette in the West, succeeded him in the Illinois mission, and finally took up his residence among the Miamis, dying on St. Joseph's river.

If the manuscript is by him, I should rather assign it to the later period of his life, when he labored almost exclusively among the Illinois and Miamis tribes, whose languages were almost the same.

A large work apparently by F. Le Boullenger, and embracing Prayers, Catechism and Dictionary of the Illinois language, is in the J. Carter Brown Library, Providence, R. I., and another Dictionary is in the hands of Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, Hartford, Conn.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN GILMARY SHEA.

March 25, 1887.

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